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The Pathfinder

JUNE, 1911

The Poetry of Florence Earle Coates

By WARWICK JAMES PRICE



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THE PATHFINDER

GLEN LEVIN SWIGGETT, *Editor*
THOMAS S. JONES, JR., *Asso. Ed'r.*

Contributions are invited from all lovers of good books and high ideals in literature, art and life. The editors disclaim responsibility for the opinions of contributors.

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VOLUME FIVE

The PATHFINDER resumes publication after an interval of six months. Mr. Thomas S. Jones, Jr., one of the younger poets of achievement as well as promise, will be associated editorially.

The spirit and purpose of the little journal will remain the same. We hope that it will continue to be the meeting-place for those who care for the beautiful and permanent things in art and literature; where one may find, selected carefully from the writings of the master-minds of the past, their best thoughts and appreciation of these things; and where the man of to-day, whether scholar, poet, or artist, may give expression to his love for and abiding faith in those personalities, institutions, and things that reflect a serious purpose and lofty ideal.



Certain numbers of Volume Five will be given, in part, to an appreciation, with selections from the work, of some of our recent writers.

The July number will be devoted largely to a poem sequence after the Japanese by Evaleen Stein, and an appreciation of Lafcadio Hearn by Julian Park.

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Vol. V]

JUNE, 1911

[No. 6

DREAM THE GREAT DREAM

By FLORENCE EARLE COATES

Dream the Great dream, though you should dream —
you, only,

And friendless follow in the lofty quest.

Though the dream lead you to a desert lonely,

Or drive you, like the tempest, without rest,

Yet, toiling upward to the highest altar,

There lay before the gods your gift supreme, —

A human heart whose courage did not falter

Though distant as Arcturus shone the Gleam.

The Gleam? — Ah, question not if others see it,

Who nor the yearning nor the passion share;

Grieve not if children of the earth decree it —

The earth, itself, — their goddess, only fair!

The soul has need of prophet and redeemer:

Her outstretched wings against her prisoning bars,

She waits for truth; and truth is with the dreamer, —

Persistent as the myriad light of stars!

*THE POETRY OF
FLORENCE EARLE COATES*

By WARWICK JAMES PRICE

Lord Roseberry remarked the other day, in referring to England's present political situation: "You know they've been 'doing away' with the Upper House ever since we've had one," and with poetry, not peers, in mind, one finds a striking parallel in one of Professor Gummere's illuminating essays, where he writes:—"Although hailed as queen of the arts and hedged about by a kind of divinity, Poetry seems to sit on an always tottering throne. In nearly every age known to human records some one has chronicled his foreboding that her days were numbered." Never was this distrust more felt than now. According to the man in the street, poetry is dead. It is the world-old story, of one who was heart-broken because he could not finally decide whether day was the absence of night, or darkness the lack of light? But "Without poetry," said Matthew Arnold, "science will appear incomplete," and the great teacher-critic continues, adding prophecy to the statement of fact, "The future of poetry is

immense, because in poetry, where it is worthy of its high destinies, our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer and surer stay. More and more mankind will discover that we turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, and to sustain us." The immortality of poetry must lie in its interpretative message, which may be given as truly in the lyric as in the ode, the little song winging its way to the heart of humanity, and resting there after the epic has been half forgotten.

Before she had found the audience that now so gladly hears her, Matthew Arnold had divined the peculiar charm and merit inherent in the poetry of Florence Earle Coates, and the closing phrase of the sentences just quoted from him suggests what that merit is. "To interpret life, to console" and "to sustain;" a gift, surely, from the gods.

The first impression of her verse gathered by the casual reader, might be that it is too grave, too austere, even, and this in spite of its constant melody and color; that amongst the supreme facts of life it recognizes pain, loss, sorrow, and death itself. But to see only this is to miss her message uplifting and glad, warm with love and light and lasting beauty. Sorrow

there is, but faith to master it ; loss may come, but hope is still victorious, death itself yielding to immortality.

The tide that ebbs by the moon flows back,
Faith builds on the ruins of sorrow,
The halcyon flutters in winter's track,
And night makes way for the morrow.

Now and again is struck a note of such perfect joyousness as this :—

For me the jasmine buds unfold
And silver daisies star the lea,
The crocus hoards the sunset gold,
And the wild rose breathes for me.
I feel the sap through the bough returning,
I share the skylark's transport fine,
I know the fountain's wayward yearning ;
I love, and the world is mine !

One of the most delightful phases of Mrs. Coates's verse is her appreciation of nature. Her handling of the theme, in its myriad, ever-wonderful charm and change, emphasizes anew the fact that nature-poetry is not mere description of landscape in metrical form, but rather the expression of one or another of the countless vital relationships that exist between nature and the deep heart of man. For this one needs to be endowed with an intuitive sympathy to supplement observation, and with culture of

craftsmanship to give voice to both, and all these qualities are present throughout the work under consideration. "How do you come to find so many interesting Indian relics?" a friend asked Thoreau, as they walked together in the Walden woods. "This way," was the simple answer, as the sage stopped and picked up a whittled piece of flint from beneath the foot of his interrogator. Such was the observing faculty of Bryant and Tennyson, such is that of John Burroughs and of Florence Earle Coates. Many of her "gems of lyric loveliness" might be quoted in illustration, redolent of the writer's sympathy with the out-of-doors, breathing its inner message, for which she stands our interpreter. The "Indian-Pipe," of itself, would prove this quality which is constantly felt, as in this apostrophe to

APRIL

Mystery's authentic dwelling,
Faith's expanding wing,
Maiden's loveliness foretelling
Fuller blossoming,
Prophet of the new creation,
Priestess of the bough,
Month of the imagination —
April, that is thou! —

and in such lines as these to

THE MORNING-GLORY

Was it worth while to paint so fair
Thy every leaf—to vein with faultless art
Each petal taking the boon light and air
Of summer so to heart?

To bring thy beauty unto perfect flower,
Then, like a passing fragrance or a smile,
Vanish away, beyond recovery's power—
Was it, frail bloom, worth while?

Thy silence answers: "Life was mine!
And I, who pass without regret or grief,
Have cared the more to make my moment fine,
Because it was so brief.

"In its first radiance I have seen
The sun!—why tarry then till comes the night?
I go my way, content that I have been
Part of the morning light!"

What George Eliot somewhere calls "the beauty of duty," sounds consistently through Mrs. Coates's work, a true interpretation of life, as Arnold would say. We live in a 'practical' age—an age of complex motives, but are, none the less, beginning to realize that we must mingle idealism with practice. In "Survival" published in the *Poems* (1898), Mrs. Coates tells us:—

The knell that dooms the voiceless and obscure
Still Memnon's music with its ghostly chime;

Strength is as weakness in the clasp of Time,
And for the things that were there is no cure.

The vineyard with its fair investiture,
The mountain summit with its hoary rime,
The throne of Cæsar, Cheops' tomb sublime,
Alike decay, and only dreams endure.

We find the same faith in "A Traveller from Altruria," published in her latest volume, the *Lyrics of Life*:—

He came to us with dreams to sell —
Ah, long ago it seems !
From regions where enchantments dwell,
He came to us with dreams to sell,—
And we had need of dreams.

Our thought had planned with artful care,
Our patient toil had wrought,
The roomy treasure-houses where
Were heaped the costly and the rare —
But dreams we had not bought.

Were one to quote further from Matthew Arnold he would find the master setting a high standard for the verse which should realize the exalted destiny he foresaw for poetry ; elevation it should have, but beauty of form as well, and the truth of life must there find voice in life's own rhythm. In other words, there must in lasting poetry be present true quality of metrical art to express worthily the value of poetic

substance; and again it is to be said that the verse of Florence Earle Coates answers these exacting requirements. Distinguished in form as in thought, it is as noteworthy in its manner as in its matter.

The invariable melody of the lines is no more remarkable than the wide variety of verse forms, handled at once with sincerity and facility. Their range is wide from the simplest love-lyric to the noblest threnody. The highly dramatic is to be found there, as well as the purely subjective. The 'occasional' poems are peculiarly felicitous, as, for example, the "Perdita" ("On seeing Miss Anderson in the rôle"), a lyric whose laughing lines dance along with a lilt of charming verse-weaving, its spontaneity no whit dulled by the craft which gives outward and visible form to the inward visions stirred by the delightful scene.

Yes, here is artistry of genuine quality, touching poesy's great circle at many points, yet never betraying the painstaking labor which must lie behind it.

More important, however, back of all this variety of form there is an equally wide range of thought. The culture born of a wide acquaintance with art and literature and travel,

is, of course, present,— though of so personal a sort that the late Richard Henry Stoddard was but one of several critics to comment upon the ‘unbookishness’ of the poems. The reader feels the heart beating warm behind the hand that writes; he realizes, albeit unconsciously, a mingling here of the ethical and the æsthetic; and when the strain rises higher on the wing of imagination or passion, he appreciates that the poet’s inward eye rests on an ideal spiritually true.

Mrs. Coates’s latest published volume, *Lyrics of Life*, is happily named. Possibly no other three words could more suggestively describe her work,— music and thoughtful song, and a clear-eyed contemplation of life—life at its purest and truest, highest and strongest.

POEMS BY
FLORENCE EARLE COATES*

THE IDEAL¹

"Not the treasure is it that has awakened in me so unspeakable a desire, but the *Blue Flower* is what I long to behold."—NOVALIS.

Something I may not win attracts me ever—
Something elusive, yet supremely fair,
Thrills me with gladness, but contents me never,
Fills me with sadness, yet forbids despair.

It blossoms just beyond the paths I follow,
It shines beyond the farthest stars I see,
It echoes faint from ocean caverns hollow,
And from the land of dreams it beckons me.

It calls, and all my best, with joyful feeling,
Essays to reach it, as I make reply;
I feel its sweetness o'er my spirit stealing,
Yet know ere I attain it I must die!

COMBATANTS²

He seemed to call me, and I shrank dismayed,
Deeming he threatened all I held most dear;
But when at last his summons I obeyed,

*Acknowledgment is made for these reprinted poems, in sequence, to ¹*The Atlantic Monthly*, ²*The Century*, ³*Lippincott's Magazine*, ⁴*Harper's Magazine*, ⁵*Scribner's Magazine*, ⁶*Harper's Magazine*, ⁷*Peterson's Magazine*, ⁸*Poems* (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.), ⁹*Poems*, ¹⁰*Atlantic Monthly*, ¹¹*Atlantic Monthly*, ¹²*Poems*, ¹³*Atlantic Monthly*, ¹⁴*Poems*, ¹⁵*The Outlook*.

Perplexed and full of fear,
I found upon his face no angry frown —
Only a vizor down.

Indignant that his voice, so calm and sweet,
In my despite, unto my soul appealed,
I cried, "If thou hast courage, turn and meet
A foeman full revealed!"
And with determined zeal that made me strong,
Contended with him long.

But oh, the armor he so meekly bore
Was wrought for him in other worlds than ours!
In firm defense of what he battled for,
Were leagued eternal powers!
I fell: yet overwhelmed by my disgrace —
At last I saw his face!

And in its matchless beauty I forgot
The constant service to my pledges due;
And with adoring love that sorrowed not,
Entreated, "Tell me who
Hath so o'erthrown my will and pride of youth."
He answered, "I am Truth."

ROUEN: IN THE PRISON OF JOAN OF ARC^s

She laid her head upon the straw,
She who had crowned a king of France,
And angel shapes, whom no man saw,
For her deliverance,
Knelt at her feet — less pure, less sweet! —
A blessing in each glance.

She laid her head upon the straw,
She who gave France her liberty,

And angel shapes, whom no man saw —
Ah, me! how could men see?—
Watched till the day, then bore away
Something the flames set free.

"POOR LOVE!" SAID LIFE ⁴

"Poor Love!" said Life, "that hast nor gold,
Nor lands, nor other store, I ween;
Thy very shelter from the cold
Is oft but lowly built and mean."
"Nay: though of rushes be my bed,
Yet am I rich," Love said.

"But," argued Life, "thrice fond art thou
To yield the sovereign gifts of earth—
The victor sword, the laureled brow—
For visioned things of little worth!"
Love gazed afar with dream-lit eyes,
And answered, "Nay: but wise."

"Yet, Love," said Life, "what can atone
For all the travail of thy years—
The yearnings vain, the vigils lone,
The pain, the sacrifice, the tears?"
Soft as the breath breathed from a rose,
The answer came: "Love knows."

AT DUSK ⁵

Earth, mother dear, I turn at last,
A homesick child, to thee!
The twilight glow is fading fast,
And soon I shall be free
To seek the dwelling, dim and vast,
Where thou awaitest me.

I am so weary, mother dear! —
 Thy child, of dual race,
 Who gazing past the star-beams clear,
 Sought the Undying's face!
 Now I but ask to know thee near,
 To feel thy large embrace!

Tranquil to lie against thy breast —
 Deep source of noiseless springs,
 Where hearts are healed, and wounds are
 dressed,
 And naught or sob or sings:
 Against thy breast to lie at rest —
 A life that folds its wings.

Some time I may— for who can tell? —
 Awake, no longer tired,
 And see the fields of asphodel,
 The dreamed-of, the desired,
 And find the heights where He doth dwell,
 To whom my heart aspired!

And then — But peace awaiteth me —
 Thy peace: I feel it near.
 The hush, the voiceless mystery,
 The languor without fear!
 Enfold me— close; I want but thee! —
 But thee, Earth-mother dear!

*INTERCHANGE*⁶

The oriole sang in the apple-tree;
 The sick girl lay on her bed, and heard
 The tremulous note of the glad wild bird;
 And, "Ah!" she sighed, "to share with thee

Life's rapture exquisite and strong :
Its hope, its eager energy,
Its fragrance and its song !”

The oriole swayed in the apple-tree,
And he sang: “ I will build, with my love a nest,
Fine as e'er welcomed a birdling guest :
Like a pendant blossom, secure yet free,
It shall hang from the bough above me there,
Bright, bright with the gold that is combed for me
From the sick girl's auburn hair !”

Then he built the nest in the apple-tree ;
And, burnished over, a ball of light,
It gleamed and shone in the sick girl's sight,
And she gazed upon it wonderingly :
But when the bird had forever flown,
They brought the nest from the apple-tree
To the bed where she lay alone.

“ O builder of this mystery !——”
The wide and wistful eyes grew dim,
And the soul of the sick girl followed him —
“ Dear bird ! I have had part, through thee,
In the life for which I long and long :
Have shared its hope, its energy,
Its rapture and its song !”

RHAPSODY†

As the mother bird to the waiting nest,
As the regnant moon to the sea,
As joy to the heart that hath first been blest —
So is my love to me.

Sweet as the song of the lark that soars
 From the net of the fowler free,
 Sweet as the morning that song adores —
 So is my love to me !

As the rose that blossoms in matchless grace
 Where the canker may not be,
 As the well that springs in a desert place —
 So is my love to me !

SIBERIA ⁸

The night-wind drives across the leaden skies,
 And fans the brooding earth with icy wings;
 Against the coast loud-booming billows flings,
 And sighs through forest-deeps with moaning sighs.
 Above the gorge, where snow, deep fallen, lies —
 A softness lending e'en to savage things —
 Above the gelid source of mountain springs,
 A solitary eagle, circling, flies.
 O pathless woods, O isolating sea,
 O steppes interminable, hopeless, cold,
 O grievous distances, imagine ye,
 Imprisoned here, the human soul to hold?
 Free, in a dungeon — as yon falcon free,—
 It soars beyond your ken, its loved ones to enfold !

DEATH ⁹

I am the key that parts the gates of Fame ;
 I am the cloak that covers cowering Shame ;
 I am the final goal of every race ;
 I am the storm-tossed spirit's resting-place.

The messenger of sure and swift relief,
Welcomed with wailings and reproachful grief,
The friend of those that have no friend but me,
I break all chains and set all captives free.

I am the cloud that, when Earth's day is done,
An instant veils an unextinguished sun ;
I am the brooding hush that follows strife,
The waking from a dream that Man calls — Life !

*THROUGH THE RUSHES*¹⁰

Through the rushes by the river
Runs a drowsy tremor sweet,
And the waters stir and shiver
In the darkness at their feet ;
From the sombre east up-stealing,
Gradual, with slow revealing,
Comes the dawn, and with a sigh
Night goes by.

Here and there, to mildest wooing,
Folded buds are open blown ;
And the drops their leaves bedewing,
Like to seed-pearls thickly sown,
Sinking, with the blessing olden,
Deep into each calyx golden,
A supreme behest obey,
Then melt away.

And while robes of splendor trailing
Fitly deck the glowing morn,
And the fragrance, fresh exhaling,
Greets her loveliness new-born,

Midst divine melodic voicings,
 Midst delicious mute rejoicings,
 Strong as when the worlds began,
 Awakens Pan !

*SAPPHO*¹¹

As a wan weaver in an attic dim,
 Hopeless yet patient, so he may be fed
 With scanty store of sorrow-seasoned bread,
 Heareth a blithe bird carol over him,

 And sees no longer walls and rafters grim,
 But rural lanes where little feet are led
 Through springing flowers, fields with clover spread.
 Clouds, swan-like, that o'er depths of azure swim —

So when upon our earth-dulled ear new breaks
 Some fragment, Sappho, of thy skyey song,
 A noble wonder in our souls awakes;
 The deathless beautiful draws strangely nigh,
 And we look up, and marvel how so long
 We were content to toil for sordid joys that die.

*LET ME BELIEVE*¹²

Let me believe you love, or let me die !
 If on your faith I may not rest secure,—
 Beyond all chance of peradventure sure,
 Trusting your half avowals, sweet and shy,
 As trusts the lark the pallid dawn-lit sky,
 Then would I rather in some grave obscure
 Repose forlorn, than, living on, endure

A question each dear transport to belie!
 It is a pain to thirst and do without,
 A pain to suffer what we deem unjust,
 To win a joy, and lay it in the dust;
 But there's a fiercer pain,—the pain of doubt:
 From other griefs Death sets the spirit free;
 Doubt steals the light from immortality!

*KENILWORTH*¹³

Towering above the plain, proud in decay —
 Her tendriled ivies, like a woman's hair,
 Veiling her hurt and hiding her despair —
 The monument of a departed day,
 The shadow of a glory passed away,
 Stands Kenilworth; stripped of her pomp and bare
 Of all that made her so supremely fair
 When Power with Love contended for her sway.
 In this wide ruin, solemn and serene,
 Where moved majestical a virgin queen,
 The peacock struts, his ominous plumes out-spread;
 And here, where casting an immortal spell,
 A sad and girlish presence seems to dwell,
 The wild bird nests and circles overhead.

*PERDITA*¹⁴

(On seeing Miss Anderson in the rôle)

She dances,
 And I seem to be
 In primrose vales of Sicily,
 Beside the streams once looked upon

By Thyrsis and by Corydon :
 The sunlight laughs as she advances,
 Shyly the zephyrs kiss her hair,
 And she seems to me as the wood-fawn, free,
 And as the wild rose, fair.

Dance, Perdita! and shepherds, blow !
 Your reeds restrain no longer !
 Till weald and welkin gleeful ring,
 Blow, shepherds, blow ! and lasses, sing,
 Yet sweeter strains and stronger !
 Let far Helorus softer flow
 'Twixt rushy banks, that he may hear ;
 Let Pan, great Pan himself, draw near !

 Stately
 She moves, half smiling
 With girlish look beguiling,—
 A dawn-like grace in all her face,
 Stately she moves, sedately,
 Through the crowd circling round her ;
 But—swift as light—
 See ! she takes flight ;
 Empty, alas ! is her place.

Follow her, follow her, let her not go !
 Mirth ended so—
 Why, 'tis but woe !
 Follow her, follow her ! Perdita !—lo,
 Love hath with wreaths enwound her !

 She dances,
 And I seem to see
 The nymph divine, Terpsichore,
 As when her beauty, dazzling shone
 On eerie heights of Helicon ;

With bursts of song her voice entrances
The dreamy, blossom-scented air,
And she seems to me as the wood-fawn, free,
And as the wild rose, fair.

*THE BURIAL OF ROBERT LOUIS
STEVENSON AT SAMOA*¹⁵

Where shall we lay you down to rest?
Where will you sleep the very best?
Mirthful and tender, dear and true —
Where shall we find a grave for you?

They thought of a spirit as brave as light,
And they bore him up to a lonely height,
And they laid him there, where he loved to be,
On a mountain gazing o'er the sea!

They thought of a soul aflood with song,
And they buried him where, the summer long,
Myriad birds his requiem sing,
And the echoing woods about him ring!

They thought of a love that life redeems,
Of a heart the home of perfect dreams,
And they left him there, where the worlds aspire
In the sunrise glow and the sunset fire!

Recent Publications

Owing to certain duties incident to the closing of the college year it was impossible to give adequate reviews of these books. If space permits, some of them will be reviewed in the July issue.—ED.

WELLS HASTINGS AND BRIAN HOOKER.—*The Professor's Mystery*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1911.

SOPHIE FISHER.—*The Imprudence of Prue*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1911.

FLORIDA POPE SUMERWELL.—*Four in Family*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1911.

DOLORES BACON.—*Operas Every Child Should Know*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page & Co. 1911.

C. N. & A. M. WILLIAMSON.—*The Golden Silence*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page & Co. 1911.

ELIZA CALVERT HALL.—*To Love and to Cherish*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1911.

MAURICE HEWLETT.—*Brazenhead, The Great*. New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons. 1911.

RANDALL PARRISH.—*Love Under Fire*. Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co. 1911.

CAROLINE DALE SNEDEKER.—*The Coward of Thermopylæ*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page & Co. 1911.

JEFFERY FARNOL.—*The Broad Highway*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1911.

F. W. BAIN.—*The Ashes of a God*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1911.

JOEL ELIAS SPINGARN.—*The New Hesperides and Other Poems*. New York: Sturgis & Walton Co. 1911.

A. B. ORAGE.—*Friedrich Nietzsche*. Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co. 1911.

FLORENCE EARLE COATES.—*Lyrics of Life*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1910.

ADA FOSTER MURRAY.—*Flower o' the Grass*. New York: Harper & Bros. 1910.

STEWART EDWARD WHITE.—*The Cabin*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page & Co. 1911.

WILLIAM P. TRENT.—*Longfellow and Other Essays*. New York: Thos. Y. Crowell & Co. 1911.

CANON SHEEHAN.—*The Intellectuals*. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1911.

MONTROSE J. MOSES.—*The Literature of the South*. New York: Thos. Y. Crowell & Co. 1910.

EDWARD BAGNALL POULTON.—*John Viriamu Jones and other Oxford Memories*. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1911.

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MILTON'S ODE ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY

* *
*



THE UNIVERSITY PRESS OF SEWANEE TENNESSEE begs leave to announce that it has a limited number of the Regular Edition of Milton's ode *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*.

This edition contains the Introduction, written with insight and appreciation by Dr. Glen Levin Swiggett, the head of the Department of Modern Languages at The University of the South.

The book is a cap octavo, the page being four and one-quarter by seven inches, printed with black ink from Caslon type, the title-page and colophon being rubricated.

The architectonic border of the title-page and the several initial letters in outline were drawn specially for this book.

A special edition of ten copies was printed on Japan paper, bound in full morocco boards, lettered in gold and lined with silk. These copies were illuminated by the Sister Superior of the Order of S. Mary in the State of Tennessee. The price of these were \$10 each, and they were all subscribed for before the book was published.

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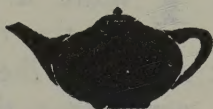
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